



EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COMMITTEE

EMPLOYERS' GROUP

Group I Internal

Newsletter of the Employers' Group

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JULY 2011

EDITORIAL BY HENRI MALOSSE

I Love My Company!

Since 2003, at the initiative of the ETHIC movement (Mouvement des Entreprises à Taille Humaine Indépendantes et de Croissance), more than 200,000 French small, medium and large businesses have organised a yearly 'I Love My Company' day on the third Thursday in October. This involves all employees, and is aimed at showing them that everyone, regardless of their position, has their own place within the company. **The occasion allows people to recognise their company as a place to live, be creative, and develop themselves personally.** Companies usually have 'team building' exercises, but orchestrating them all on the same day allows for media coverage, as well as exchanges between different enterprises.



The event has now become a tradition, and receives increasing media coverage every year. It was why on the evening before the event in 2009, Madame Christine Lagarde, then Minister of Economy and Finance, wished a 'happy birthday' to companies live on Channel FR2's eight o'clock news.

The Employers' Group of the EESC has sought to promote this idea at the European level. We must first acknowledge the growing role played by our Group on the European scene, as **we have provided a common platform for entrepreneurs and their organisations.**

It's also a chance to promote an event at the European level, which should **reinforce the image of business and entrepreneurship to the public, especially young people** who, we know, often still hold negative stereotypes.

I also see this project as an opportunity to **build a sense of community, and thus develop a genuine European identity amongst companies.**

If expanded to all 27 EU member states, this event could, especially for SMEs, help establish temporary twinning of companies, with the objective of making them last and turn into concrete exchanges and partnerships in the future. For companies located in several EU countries, this will become a great way to strengthen the spirit of solidarity.

As Europe seeks to build its identity, this is a simple and fun way in which to give companies a European identity.

So the European Day of the Enterprise – what do you think?

Henri Malosse
President of the Employers' Group

MEMBERS' VOICES



Marja-Liisa Peltola (FI)

Member of Group I

Working in the Chamber of Commerce of Finland, **Marja-Liisa Peltola** is mainly involved in international issues like trade facilitation questions, including customs procedures and internationalisation services offered by the Chambers of Commerce. Inside the European Chamber of Commerce Network there are many common interests which are enhanced by the association EUROCHAMBRES, one of which is the EU Single Market. Ms Peltola's work has focused on related issues, such as the **public procurement, market access, trade in services.**

In the European Economic and Social Committee, her priorities are linked with the

topics dealing with business, especially **providing companies with more possibilities to expand their markets without trade barriers in the EU as well in 3rd countries.** When she was rapporteur of the EESC opinion REX/262 on the EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region, she tried to find possibilities to make the Baltic Sea region more competitive and to develop its market into an interesting one for companies to operate in. She shares that "working in the EEA (European Economic Area) Consultative Committee has been very interesting especially now when Iceland has become a candidate country".

“working in the European Economic Area Consultative Committee has been very interesting especially now when Iceland has become a candidate country”



Ulla Sirkeinen (FI)

Member of Group I

In the EESC **Ulla Sirkeinen** represents the Confederation of Finnish Industries. Since the early 1980's, she has been in charge of technology and innovation policies, industrial and SME policies, and later energy policies. **For more than 20 years, she has been a member of the management board e.g. director of the Confederation.** From 2005 to 2010 she headed the Brussels Office of the Confederation. In between she acted as Industrial Councillor at the Finnish delegation to the OECD for a few years.

Due to her background and experience, her interests in the EESC cover **all subjects linked to industrial policy in the broadest sense, more or less encompassing the EU 2020 strategy.** Within this broad framework she has been most active on energy policy, sustainable development and innovation policy.

GROUP I OPINIONS

We feature four of the opinions with rapporteurs from Group I, adopted during the 472nd plenary session on June 15th and 16th:

Taxation of the Financial Sector, ECO/284



Stasys Kropas (LT)

Member of Group I

The opinion by **Stasys Kropas** on "**Taxation of the Financial Sector**" **ECO/284**, states that appropriate regulation and supervision should **ensure the stability and effectiveness of the financial sector**, as well as the creation of appropriate incentives for financial sector institutions. Furthermore, the financial sector should contribute to the fiscal consolidation efforts in a fair and substantial way. Any new tax on financial institutions should be designed in a way that takes into account the institutions' ability to pay and their ability to comply with new capital requirements. Mr. Kropas commented that if implemented properly, it **may result in a better financial sector taxation system, that would meet the purposes of generating tax revenues, curtailing risk-taking and contributing to the prevention of excessive speculation.**

The EU Budget Review, ECO/290



Henri Malosse (FR)

President of Group I

In time for the new Commission proposal on the new Multi-annual Financial Framework on 29th June, the EESC adopted the opinion by **Henri Malosse** (co-rapporteur Gérard Dantin), on "**The EU Budget Review**" **ECO/290**. The opinion suggests that the "**juste retour**" principle **should be abandoned in favour of the subsidiarity principle**. It congratulates the Commission on proposing the **return to the principle of own resources**, and finds that **the European budget must be strengthened to have a leverage effect**. The opinion also recommends a more systematic recourse to EIB loans, stresses the importance of public approval, and calls for studies on the cost of non-Europe.

European Digital Cinema, TEN/439



Eugen Mircea Burada (RO)

Member of Group I

Entitled the "**European Digital Cinema**" **TEN/439**, the opinion by **Eugen Mircea Burada** stresses the importance of **the role of European cinema in helping shape a European identity**. The topic of European cinema is complex, sensitive, serious and above all political.

The opinion recommends that **competition is what must spur on European cinema, whilst at the same time establishing its own identity to avoid being compared with Hollywood**. It mentions that the EESC is in favour of establishing a specific, clear and stable legal framework at EU level; however the importance of financial resources is also stressed. The report calls of an archive of films, to preserve European cinematic heritage. Mr. Burada commented that cinematic culture is a principal means of communication, solidarity, democracy, and above all European cohesion.

GROUP I OPINIONS

The contribution of the civil society to the Eastern Partnership, REX/323

The opinion by **Gintaras Morkis** on "The contribution of the civil society to the Eastern Partnership" **REX/323**, states that the contribution of civil society to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) should be supported and duly taken into account in order to ensure the success of the EaP. **The Committee is following the events in the southern Mediterranean closely and it firmly believes that the EU should support the process of democratisation and sta-**



Gintaras Morkis (LT)
Member of Group I

bilisation in the region. At the same time, the EESC calls for a **long-term, balanced approach to the EU's southern and eastern neighbours, including focusing on financial aid for political and economic reforms, adaptation to EU standards and strengthening civil society.** The opinion stresses the importance of working together with independent organisations in the partner countries. The Committee also calls for the **establishment of a mechanism of civil society consultation** in all Eastern Partnership countries, taking into consideration the specific conditions of each partner country. Mr. Morkis shared: **"the Eastern Partnership is a long-term policy, meaning that this topic will remain important and live on in the future"**.

MEMBERS' LIFE

Anna Bredima's proposals on optimising EESC opinions

Dr. Anna Bredima, member of the Employers' Group of the EESC, presented a working document proposing a **"menu" of changes to the working methods of the Committee in the preparation, presentation and follow-up of opinions.** These changes are aimed at their optimisation. Under the Treaties, **the core function of the EESC is its consultative status in the preparation of EU legislation, hence, the delivery of opinions.** In recent years however, the other functions of EESC have tended to overshadow its core tasks.



The draft paper has identified **5 main areas of necessary changes:**

- Anticipate referrals
- Accelerate the delivery of opinions to influence the other institutions
- Produce shorter and better opinions
- Improve the delivery process
- Pass the EESC "message" to the other institutions.

Following the Group's discussion, the document will be **revised and published in the autumn 2011 as an official Group I strategic paper.**

GROUP I EVENTS

Group I's Thematic Meeting on "Education and the New Needs of the European Economy" in Corsica, 8 July

On 8 July 2011 the President of the Employers' Group of the EESC, Henri Malosse, hosted a thematic meeting on "Education and the new needs of the European economy" organised in collaboration with the Ajaccio Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) at the Palace of Congress in Ajaccio, Corsica.



Jacek Krawczyk, Henri Malosse, Jan Trusczyński, Staffan Nilsson

Speakers included Jacques Nacer, President of the Ajaccio CCI and Jacek Krawczyk, Vice-President of the EESC, who highlighted the key priorities of the Polish presidency of the EU. Jan Trusczyński, Director-General of DG Education and Culture, presented the Commission's strategy and support programmes in the field of education, training and culture. It is noteworthy that **contrary to other policy areas, the EU budget devoted to education and culture action programmes will be increased if the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework proposed by the Commission to the EU budget authority is accepted.** Mr Staffan Nilsson, President of the EESC, opened the roundtable discussion by underlining the added value for the Committee to meet local and national actors in the Member states.

Group I members Vladimíra Drbalová, Madi Sharma and Stéphane Buffetaut gave presentations respectively on: **the need for the EU to meet the challenges of new skills for new jobs, the ways to promote creativity and entrepreneurship in the EU and on the role of culture as an engine for European identity.**

Antoine Aiello, President of the University of Corsica Pascal Paoli in Corte and Pierre Anchetti, President of the training committee in the Ajaccio CCI presented their experiences in the field of education and training. The roundtable discussion was moderated by Mr Martin Westlake, Secretary-General of the EESC. The meeting was attended by local business representatives, entre-



Eve Päärendson, Anna Bredima

preneurs, local and regional public authority representatives and Employers' Group members.

“knowledge, education and skills remain a prerequisite for growth... education has a key role in enhancing European identity”

The key message of the meeting was that **knowledge, education and skills remain a prerequisite for growth.** It was suggested that the EU has the potential to overcome the current economic crisis if EU and national decision-makers, businesses and actors in the field of education and training meet the following challenges:

- establish efficient, structured and sustainable systems for transferring know-how, knowledge and competences
- promote better synergies and interaction between all the stakeholders
- encourage exchanges of experiences and mobility
- reform education systems in the EU in order to give new skills and mindsets to EU citizens, namely turning ideas into action.

Mr. Malosse concluded the discussion by highlighting the key role of education in enhancing European identity.

GROUP I EVENTS

Group I's Action Group on Young Entrepreneurs, 5 July

The Employer's Group of the EESC hosted a meeting of the Action Group on Young European Entrepreneurs, on



July 5th 2011. Henri Malosse, President of Group I, opened the meeting and reiterated the goal of the action group: to **promote entrepreneurship to youths at a European level, whilst at the same time aiming to achieve a sense of European identity amongst these young entrepreneurs.**

Group I members were joined by representatives of business and youth organisations including BUSINESSEUROPE, EuroCommerce, European Youth Forum, Generation Europe Foundation, Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise, as well as several representatives from the European Com-

mission, DG Employment and DG Enterprise. Raymond Maes from DG Employment explained that **the Commission is promoting entrepreneurship by means of several initiatives**, including a report and policy briefing on the situation of entrepreneurship in the EU scheduled for the autumn. Madi Sharma, member of the EESC's Employer's Group, stressed that **a coherent approach is needed when promoting entrepreneurship**, and that entrepreneurship needs to be supported in a horizontal manner rather than trickling down vertically through the traditional means of education. Eve Päärendson, Employer's Group member, mentioned that the **issue of internationalization should be added to the list of priorities for the second half of 2011**, as it is important for young entrepreneurs to understand and interact with different business cultures.

Other priorities were identified, namely further promoting mentoring schemes, as well as looking further into whether current data collection related to entrepreneurship and inclusion is sufficient. The number of issues raised and solutions proposed will be addressed at the **new Young European Entrepreneurs' Seminar on 16-17 November 2011 at the EESC.**

MEMBERS' LIFE

Stéphane Buffetaut at the Plenary Assembly of the European Forum of Nuclear Energy, 19 May

On May 19th, Employers' Group member Stéphane Buffetaut concluded the opening session of the Plenary Assembly of the European Forum of Nuclear Energy, which included Commissioner Oettinger, the Prime Ministers of Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the French minister for Industry, and other participants.

The atmosphere of the meeting was affected by the recent nuclear accident in Fukushima and the discussions focused on the definition of stress tests. Under these circumstances, Mr. Buffetaut, President of the TEN Section of the EESC, recalled **the Committee's doctrine on nuclear power: the freedom of choice for each Member State on using nuclear power, and the interest in this energy source within the European energy mix** – particularly in the context of the fight against CO2 emissions.

He also stressed that **resistance testing should not be seen as a threat to the nuclear industry**; on the contrary it should be seen as a tool to increase the acceptability of nuclear energy for civil society. This is only

possible with more transparency and information.



In conclusion, it is important to note that Richard Adams from the EESC chairs the working group on transparency in the European Forum for Nuclear Energy on behalf of our Committee, and that **our institution carries special weight under the provisions of the Euratom Treaty.**

GROUP I EVENTS

Europe, trade and the wider world: Group I's seminar on business and EU external relations after the Lisbon Treaty, 19 October, London

The Employers' Group of the EESC will hold this key seminar in Canary Wharf, London on Wednesday, 19th October 2011 at the offices of Clifford Chance (10, Upper Bank St, London E14 5JJ).

Its purpose is to both investigate **how the Employers' Group and the main EU business organisations can best align our strategies over trade, investment, and other key international issues** following the changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty, as well as to **strengthen the image of European business abroad.**

The Seminar will examine the following topics:

- Changes to EU trade and external relations policy, and the consequences for EU business following the Lisbon Treaty
- Supporting a more coherent business approach abroad
- Facing the growing economic challenges from the key emerging markets
- Business and development: getting a fair balance between aid and investment

Most external speakers have already confirmed their participation. These include Ignacio Garcia Berbero and Peter Thompson (DG Trade), Prof Steve Woolcock (LSE), Maria Marinaki (EEAS), Oliver Wieck (BDI), Olivier Clark (Consultant, DG DevCo), and Dambisa Moyo (tbc).

A further key objective of the Seminar will be to examine in depth the **crucial role foreseen for the Committee and three other European business representatives, as part of the proposed Civil Society Fora** which was set out in new trade agreements. **How we handle these Fora will largely determine whether, or to what extent, the Committee will**



be approached for future Civil Society platforms. It is already included in the Cariforum Agreement and the Korea FTA, and agreed for the EU - Central America and EU - Peru/Colombia FTAs, both yet to be finally ratified. Future FTAs nearing agreement include India, Ukraine and Mercosur (South America), with other Asian countries also in prospect (including Japan).

MEMBERS' LIFE

Brendan Burns during the European Small Business Alliance conference on "Upgrading SMEs' Potential", 23 June

“ We are constantly told by politicians that “SMEs are the backbone of our economy”, but **do politicians really understand the problems being faced by Europe’s small businesses - especially those that are not in our major towns and cities?**

One of the major problems faced by SMEs is access to fast and reliable broadband; this was discussed at the annual conference by the European Small Business Alliance (ESBA). The importance of **“Getting small businesses online” and the problems that they face trying to become part of the new digital age is a major barrier to innovation and creating jobs in Europe.** At the conference, industry representatives complained bitterly over the lack of good quality broadband espe-



cially in rural areas and less populated areas. They also pointed out that there was a **lack of a cohesive European plan to get small businesses on line.**

The responses from the speakers who represented the **European Commission and European Parliament were not helpful; they were aware of the issue but said that it was up to national governments to solve it.** Conference delegates were also told that money had been made available to national governments for ICT projects, but Brussels had no control over how it was spent. ICT is clearly an issue that needs to be discussed, and access to broadband services has to be top of that agenda, followed by access to mobile phone communications. The more SME conferences that highlight this issue, the higher this will come up the agendas of the Parliament, the Council and the Commission. However, **if the discussions are going to have real value, then businesses need better answers than pointed fingers at the Member States. ”**

FOR YOUR AGENDA (SAVE THE DATE)

Upcoming events of Group I:

- Extraordinary meeting of Group I on energy issues and cocktail _____ 14/09/2011, 18:00 – 20:00
- Meeting of the EESC Bureau members of Group I _____ 20/09/2011, 10:00 – 12:30
- Meeting of the Group I Bureau _____ 21/09/2011, 09:00 – 10:00
- Group I meeting _____ 21/09/2011, 10:00 – 13:00
- Extraordinary meeting of Group I and the Group I Bureau - Sopot (Poland) ___ 29-30/09/2011
- Extraordinary meeting of Group I "International trade and development aid" - Brussels/London - 30 Members _____ 18-19/10/2011
- Young European Entrepreneurs' Seminar _____ 16-17/11/2011
- Extraordinary Group I meeting on the topic "SMEs/SBA" _____ 12/12/2011

THE JULY PLENARY

OPINIONS PRESENTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE EMPLOYERS' GROUP DURING THE PLENARY SESSION OF 13-14 JULY 2011:

- INT/554 – Expanding the use of e-Procurement in the EU and ECO/295 – Removing cross-border tax obstacles for EU citizens by **Vincent Farrugia**
- INT/564 – Harmonisation of consumer claims in cosmetic products by **Krzysztof Ostrowski**
- INT/570 – Towards a more efficient European procurement market by **Joost van Iersel**
- INT/571 – Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding, co-rapporteur: **Erik Svensson**
- INT/583 – Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking by **Mihai Manoliu**
- SOC/404 – An Agenda for new skills and jobs: a European contribution towards full employment by **Vladimíra Drbalová**
- CCMI/091 – Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw materials by **Josef Zbořil**
- TEN/450 – The Energy Efficiency Plan 2011 by Ms **Ulla Sirkeinen**
- TEN/456 – Revision of EIB transport lending policy by **Jan Simons**
- REX/320 – Towards a comprehensive European international investment policy by **Jonathan Peel**



Members of Group I have presented amendments to opinions, most notably the amendments by **Daniel Mareels** (on the opinion INT/577 – Credit agreements – residential property), **Christa Schweng** (on the opinion ECO/293 – The Future of VAT), **Joachim Wuermeling** (on the opinion ECO/297 – Financial education and responsible consumption) and **Jonathan Peel** (on the opinion NAT/497 – The Eastern Partnership and the eastern dimension of EU policies, with an emphasis on agriculture).



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